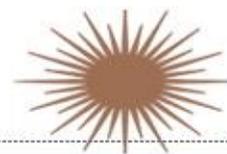


NEWS RELEASE

Arizona Department of Health Services



HEALTH AND WELLNESS FOR ALL ARIZONANS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE – November 14, 2012

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ARIZONA CHILD FATALITY REVIEW PROGRAM **RELEASES ANNUAL REPORT**

REPORT FINDS FEWER CHILDREN DIED IN 2011; LEADERS ENCOURAGE MORE COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

Every child's death is a tragedy. Each death impacts family members, friends, classmates, neighbors and the community. While the number of children who die in Arizona continues to decline (almost 30 percent fewer deaths since 2005), the number is still too high. In 2011, 837 children died in Arizona.

Experts review every child's death in Arizona individually and then join together on a statewide level to look for and recommend ways to prevent child deaths. The [19th Annual Child Fatality Review Report](#) outlines recommendations for elected officials, policy makers, parents and the public for 2011.

This year's report highlights the need to reduce the number of children who die from suicide, drowning and maltreatment*. The review team determined that 94 percent of 32 drowning deaths in 2011 were preventable. Unfortunately, the report also noted an increase in child suicides in 2011. Thirty-nine children died compared to 24 children in 2010.

“We know more about suicide now and the best answer to reduce suicides is community response. Everyone from teachers and first responders to physicians to friends and family has a role in stopping suicides. We now have the information and education on how to create a safety net for our communities.” said Will Humble, ADHS Director. “At ADHS we have a variety of tools to help those who come in contact with children – from online training for teachers and physicians to classroom training for the public.” Our goal is to make suicide a never event; one suicide is one too many.

* The number of child maltreatment deaths presented in this report is not comparable to child maltreatment deaths reported by the Arizona Department of Economic Security for the National Child Abuse and Neglect Data System. (19th Annual CFR, page 70)

The report also shows that 14 of the 71 maltreatment* cases in 2011 were never reported to the state's Child Protective Services (CPS). Communities and families have a duty to report suspected child abuse or neglect. Many times, the first time the Department of Economic Security (DES) learned of a child abuse case was after the child had died.

“The DES partnership with the Department of Health Services and Child Fatality Review Program is critical to advancing our shared interest in strengthening Arizona's ability to protect children,” said Clarence Carter, DES Director. “Protecting our children is a community issue and we ask for continued cooperation with first responders such as law enforcement and fire fighters, the medical community, churches, schools, public and non-profit agencies, and community groups to be ever vigilant about child safety in the state of Arizona.”

With respect to the relative impact of Arizona's Child Protective Services agency in preventing child fatalities, it is important to note that of the child fatalities posted to date by DES per A.R.S. 8-807 (as of November 7, 2012):

- Of the 35 total child fatalities in 2010, 26 had never been reported to CPS.
- Of the 35 total fatalities in 2011, 24 had no prior CPS reports.
- To date in 2012, of the 16 total fatalities, nine had no prior CPS reports.

As a result, for approximately two-thirds of child fatalities in each year, CPS never had an opportunity to intervene and protect the child. Every day, CPS staff members work tirelessly to serve the Department's mission to protect children and find permanency. CPS is only one part of Arizona's child welfare system. Arizonans must come together as a community in order to provide for and support child abuse prevention efforts.

The Child Fatality Review report underscores the importance of working together to protect the children of Arizona. The [community recommendations](#) from the report include simple action items that everyone can do to help reduce the number of children who die in our state.

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